



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



SANDRA SHEWRY
Director

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

September 17, 2004

To : Laboratory Manager
: Perinatal Manager
: Risk Manager

Subject: Delays in sending newborn screening specimens to the screening laboratories


Many hospitals in the state cause delays in the newborn screening process by holding specimens for a few days in order to send a group of them to the screening laboratory. The transport logs sent along with the specimens to the screening labs show that specimens have been collected as much as five days apart and are being "batched," i.e., sent together. This practice can contribute to delays in the diagnosis and treatment of babies who have one of the screened-for disorders. It is poor medical care and a violation of state regulations, exposing the offending hospitals to unnecessary liability.

The goal of newborn screening is to prevent the long-term effects of disease through early detection and treatment. The sooner babies with the screened-for disorders are put on treatment, the smaller the chance that they will have sustained permanent damage such as developmental delay. Newborn screening providers (i.e., perinatal facilities, birthing centers, midwives) play a critical role in assuring that this goal is met by collecting screening specimens from babies in the first six days of life, sending the specimens to the screening laboratories for testing within 12 hours of collection, and by checking the newborns' medical records within 14 days of discharge to assure that screening results have been received. Once primary care providers are apprised of test results, they are required to take appropriate follow-up measures within state-mandated time frames.

Specimens collected on the same day can certainly be sent together. However, all specimens should be sent out promptly (even if there is only one specimen), regardless of whether they are sent by courier or US Mail. The only time specimens can legitimately be held for longer than one day is Sundays or holidays when there is no US mail service or courier service.

Please contact your Newborn Screening Area Service Center (see list on back) for assistance or to have your questions answered.

Sincerely,


George C. Cunningham, MD, MPH, Chief
Genetic Disease Branch


Kathleen Velazquez, MPH, Chief
Newborn Screening Section

cc: Chief, Neonatology

NewbornScreening Area Service Centers (NBS-ASCs)

Stanford University Medical Center (650-812-0353)

Counties		
<i>Alameda</i>	<i>Mendocino</i>	<i>Santa Clara</i>
<i>Contra Costa</i>	<i>Monterey</i>	<i>Santa Cruz</i>
<i>Del Norte</i>	<i>Napa</i>	<i>Solano</i>
<i>Humboldt</i>	<i>San Benito</i>	<i>Sonoma</i>
<i>Lake</i>	<i>San Francisco</i>	<i>Stanislaus</i>
<i>Marin</i>	<i>San Mateo</i>	

Children's Hospital Central California (559-353-6416)

Counties		
<i>Alpine</i>	<i>Lassen</i>	<i>Shasta</i>
<i>Amador</i>	<i>Madera</i>	<i>Sierra</i>
<i>Butte</i>	<i>Mariposa</i>	<i>Siskiyou</i>
<i>Calaveras</i>	<i>Merced</i>	<i>Sutter</i>
<i>Colusa</i>	<i>Modoc</i>	<i>Tehama</i>
<i>El Dorado</i>	<i>Mono</i>	<i>Trinity</i>
<i>Fresno</i>	<i>Nevada</i>	<i>Tulare</i>
<i>Glenn</i>	<i>Placer</i>	<i>Tuolumne</i>
<i>Inyo</i>	<i>Plumas</i>	<i>Yolo</i>
<i>Kern</i>	<i>Sacramento</i>	<i>Yuba</i>
<i>King</i>	<i>San Joaquin</i>	

UCLA Medical Center (310-826-4458)

Counties		
<i>San Luis Obispo</i>	<i>Santa Barbara</i>	<i>Ventura</i>
<u><i>Los Angeles:</i></u>		
Antelope Valley Hospital		
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center		
Citrus Valley-Queen of the Valley		
East Valley Hospital Medical Center		
Encino-Tarzana Medical Center		
Foothill Presbyterian Hospital		
Glendale Adventist Medical Center		
Glendale Memorial Hospital & Health Ctr		
Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital		
Huntington Memorial Hospital		
Methodist Hospital of Southern California		
Northridge Hospital Medical Center		
Northridge Hospital Med. Ctr. - Sherman Way		
Olive View-UCLA Medical Center		
Pacifica Hospital of the Valley		
Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center		
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center		
Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center		
Queen of Angels-Hollywood Presbyterian		
Saint John's Health Center		
San Dimas Community Hospital		
San Gabriel Valley Medical Center		
Santa Monica - UCLA Medical Center		
UCLA Medical Center		
Valley Presbyterian Hospital		
Verdugo Hills Hospital		
West Hills Hospital & Medical Center		

Harbor/UCLA Medical Center (310) 222-3751

Counties
<i>San Bernadino</i>
<u><i>Los Angeles:</i></u>
Bellflower Medical Center
Beverly Hospital
California Hospital Medical Center
Centinela Hospital Medical Center
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Daniel Freeman Memorial Hospital
Downey Regional Medical Center
East Los Angeles Community Hospital
Garfield Medical Center
Good Samaritan Hospital
Greater El Monte Hospital
Los Angeles Community Hospital
Los Angeles Metropolitan Medical Center
LAC Harbor - UCLA Medical Center
LAC/USC Medical Center
Little Compnay of Mary Hospital
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center
Memorial Hospital of Gardena
Mission Hospital
Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center
Monterey Park Hospital
Pacific Hospital
Pacific Alliance Medical Center
Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital
Robert F. Kennedy Medical Center
San Pedro Penininsula Hospital
St Francis Hospital
St Mary Medical Center
Suburban Medical Center
Torrance Memorial Hospital
White Memorial Medical Center
Whittier Hospital Medical Center

UCSD Medical Center (858) 300-1081

Counties
<i>Imperial</i>
<i>Orange</i>
<i>Riverside</i>
<i>San Diego</i>

Kaiser Permanente Northern CA (510) 752-6192

Kaiser Permanente Southern CA (626) 564-3322